

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-15, 25-33 were examined. Claims 5 and 6 were canceled as being duplicative. Claim 3 was canceled and the subject matter was incorporated into claim 1. Claims 7, 9 and 10 were amended to change their dependencies in view of the cancellation of claim 6. Claim 1 was amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that Applicant regards as the invention. Thus, after entry of this Amendment, claims 1, 3-4, 7-15, 25-33 will be pending in the application.

Acknowledgment of Priority

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's entry of Applicant's priority papers.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the allowance of the Examiner's indication that claims 12-14 and 25-33 are allowed, and that claims 3 and 7-11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicant amended independent claim 1 to include the subject matter of claim 3, which was cancelled.

Double Patenting

Claims 5 and 6 were objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claims 25 and 28. Without acceding to the correctness of the Examiner's conclusion, Applicant has canceled claims 5 and 6. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

A. Claims 1 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,334,942 to Haba et al. (Haba), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,981,079 to Mount, III et al. (Mount).

Applicant respectfully disagrees.

In view of the foregoing amendments, Applicant believes the rejection is moot.

Independent claims 1 and 15 are therefore patentable over Haba in view of Mount. The claims that depend from claims 1 and 15 directly or indirectly are patentable for at least the same reasons. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

B. Claims 1, 4, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,004,672 to D'Ottavio et al. (D'Ottavio), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,981,079 to Mount, III et al. (Mount).

Applicant respectfully disagrees.

In view of the foregoing amendments, Applicant believes the rejection is moot.

Independent claims 1 and 15 are therefore patentable over D'Ottavio in view of Mount. The claims that depend from claims 1 and 15 directly or indirectly, including claim 4, are patentable for at least the same reasons. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

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Serial No: 09/833,036
Examiner: Versteeg, Steven H.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims pending in the above-identified application are in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If the present application is found by the Examiner not to be in condition for allowance, then the Applicants hereby request a telephone or personal interview to facilitate the resolution of any remaining matters. Applicants' attorney may be contacted by telephone at the number indicated below to schedule such an interview.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is authorized to charge any additional fees incurred as a result of the filing hereof or credit any overpayment to our deposit account #19-0120.

Respectfully submitted,
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